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SUPPORT BY THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM OF THE EFFORTS OF GOVERNMENTS TO PROMOTE AND CONSOLIDATE NEW OR RESTORED DEMOCRACIES

Letter dated 4 June 1996 from the Permanent Representatives of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to transmit herewith the texts of a joint communiqué and a joint declaration of the Baltic Presidents on partnership for integration, which were adopted by the Presidents of the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Latvia and the Republic of Lithuania at a meeting held at Vilnius on 28 May 1996.

We should be grateful if you would have this communiqué and declaration circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 41 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Trivimi VELLISTE
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
of Estonia to
the United Nations

(Signed) Alvars BAUMANIS
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ANNEX I

Joint Declaration of the Baltic Presidents on Partnership for Integration, issued at Vilnius on 28 May 1996

We, the Presidents of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, declare to the world continuing intentions to seek to reintegrate ourselves in all European institutions. We believe that our countries can and will make a joint contribution to the European Union and NATO. And we want to make these important steps not in competition with one another, but together, recognizing that Baltic security like European security is both multifaceted and indivisible.

We recognize that integration is a process that will take time and require much from us, but we are convinced of the following:

- First, both the European Union and NATO should start the accession process together with us and other Central European countries, even if actual membership will take some time. For all of us, the "who" of the question of enlargement of both institutions is considerably more important to our security and that of Europe as a whole than the "when".

- Second, we want to take these steps not out of fear of third countries because we believe that our place is in a united Europe.

- Third, our three nations are committed to making the sacrifices necessary to achieve these goals. Our economies are already being brought into line with European standards and our soldiers are already participating in the NATO-led peace implementation operations in the former Yugoslavia.

Because of our joint commitment to these goals, no one should try to play one of our countries off against another. As we were when we strove to recover our independence, so too now we are united and will remain so.

Algirdas Brazauskas
President
Republic of Lithuania

Lennart Meri
President
Republic of Estonia

Guntis Ulmanis
President
Republic of Latvia

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ANNEX II

Joint Communiqué of the meeting of the Presidents of the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Latvia and the Republic of Lithuania held at Vilnius on 28 May 1996

The Presidents of the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Latvia and the Republic of Lithuania met at Vilnius on 28 May 1996 and discussed a number of mutually important issues, paying special attention to trilateral cooperation among Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, processes of European integration and NATO enlargement. Significance was given also to the prospects for the deepening of Baltic Sea regional cooperation and to relations with neighbouring countries.

The Presidents noted an ever-increasing significance of trilateral Estonian-Latvian-Lithuanian political and economic relations.

The Presidents stressed that cooperation aiming at the creation of an integrated infrastructure in the Baltic region, attractive for facilitation of investments, would best serve the national interests of the individual countries. In this connection the Presidents welcomed the practical decisions reached by the Prime Ministers of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania at their meeting at Vilnius on 14 April 1996.

The Presidents underlined the significance of the "Via Baltica" project for the development of a European transportation infrastructure as well as creation of joint energy systems. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania will continue to be actively involved in the implementation of these projects. In order to increase border permeability the appropriate authorities were instructed to speed up the establishment of joint border checkpoints and the creation of a common transit procedure. At the same time Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania will harmonize and strengthen control of the external border. Interoperability of authorities responsible for preventing organized transboundary crime and illegal migration should be made more efficient.

The Presidents welcomed the conclusion of negotiations among Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania on the Free Trade Agreement in agricultural products, which will create an important precondition to the integration of the Baltic States into the internal market of the European Union (EU).

The Presidents underlined the importance of the Baltic States' cooperation on the road to integration into the European and transatlantic structures. The Presidents agreed that Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania would support each other in the process of integration into the European Union and would hold regular consultations on matters of common interest.

The Presidents were encouraged by the conclusions of the European Council meeting at Madrid, welcomed the beginning of the EU Intergovernmental Conference and underlined the working spirit expressed in the Turin European Council Presidency Conclusions. The Presidents were unanimous in opinion that the successful conclusion of the Intergovernmental Conference would be an important

factor for the enlargement of the European Union. The Presidents emphasized the importance of the simultaneous commencement of the accession negotiations with all applicant countries not later than six months after the conclusion of the Conference.

The Presidents looked forward to the forthcoming European Council meeting at Florence and expressed the hope that the meeting would prove concrete and constructive.

The Presidents welcomed the Presidency Declaration of the Baltic Sea States Summit, held at Visby on 3 and 4 May 1996, in which support for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in their preparation for membership of the European Union was underlined. They greeted the Baltic Sea Region Initiative presented by the President of the European Commission to the Visby Summit as an expression of enhanced European Union interest in the region.

The Presidents noted that the evolving European security architecture should be based upon the concept of indivisible security. Security, stability, democracy and well-being in Europe are ensured through European integration and transatlantic solidarity.

The Presidents confirmed their interest in pursuing bilateral dialogue with NATO on issues related to the enlargement of the alliance. The Presidents stressed that in order to secure stability and democracy in the whole of Europe, the accession process should start simultaneously with all countries that have the prospect of EU membership and have shown an interest in joining NATO.

The Presidents emphasized the significance of the involvement and contribution of the United States in the stability of Europe. The Presidents expressed their belief that the United States would continue to support Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania on their way towards full integration into the transatlantic alliance, with the goal of promoting stability and security in the region.

The Presidents discussed the contributions of the Baltic States to the implementation of the Dayton peace agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina, signed in December 1995 in Paris. The Presidents noted Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian participation in the forces of the Implementation Force (IFOR) and contributions to the organization of elections and the reconstruction of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a demonstration of readiness and capability to share responsibilities for peace and stability in Europe.

The Presidents once more stressed the importance of cooperation between the Baltic and Nordic States as part of the European integration process to promote stability, security, democracy and development in the region.

The Presidents recognized that ever-increasing cooperation with the other Central European countries positively contributes to political and economic developments on the way to the integration of Europe.

The Presidents exchanged opinions on the situation in the Russian Federation, with a view to the forthcoming presidential elections. The

Presidents expressed the hope that the process and outcome of the elections would allow the continuation of democratic reforms in the Russian Federation and would preserve its commitments to universally accepted principles and norms of international law.

The Presidents welcomed the development of democratic and economic reforms in Ukraine as an important factor for stability and security in Europe and expressed their support for the intensified relations between Ukraine and European as well as transatlantic organizations.

Algirdas Brazauskas President Republic of Lithuania	Lennart Meri President Republic of Estonia	Guntis Ulmanis President Republic of Latvia

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